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AUTHOR Correia, Stephen T.

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ABSTRACT

This paper argues that the study of social studies foundations can and does belong in a teacher training program and can serve as a bridge from the college classroom to actual classroom teaching. Preservice social studies professionals should probe the difficult questions and challenges of the foundation of the social studies. Interest in the origins of the social studies has increased in the past 20 years with numerous publications examining the history of social studies. The document traces the development of the social studies through the work of leading names in the education field. Social studies methods textbooks and foundations are examined. The paper concludes that those interested in preserving social studies can return to field's origins for some, but not all, of the answers with which to respond to contemporary critics. (Contains 27 footnotes.) (EH)

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"Putting the Past into the Present: Social Studies Foundations and Methods Classes"

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by

Stephen T. Correia
Assistant professor of Education
236 Boyle Hall
St. Norbert College
De Pere, WI 54115

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"Putting the Past into the Present: Social Studies Foundations and Methods Classes"

In the last 20 years there has been a virtual explosion in both research and interest in the foundations of social studies. Almost every social studies methods book published in the last five years contains some reference to the origins of the field. The National Council for the Social Studies recognized, beginning in 1977 this interest with the establishment of a "Special Interest Group" devoted exclusively to an increased understanding of the origins of social studies.[1]

Interest in the foundations of social studies, as determined by membership in the National Council for the Social Studies' (hereafter NCSS) "Foundations of the Social Studies Special Interest Group," and publications relative to group concerns, is almost totally the province of university and college professors. However, as noted by Professor James Leming in his often cited work "The Two Cultures of Social Studies," there exists in social studies a persistent abyss which separates the everyday lives and concerns of practicing classroom teachers from the research interests and methods class preparation of future social studies teachers[2]. The foundations of social studies fits the bill as a distinct area of a difference of interest between these "two cultures."

In order for the study of social studies foundations to have a place in the preparation of social studies teachers, this gap between social studies practitioners and university theorists must be bridged. If this difference is ignored, the potential value to pre-service teachers of a study of social studies foundations will be lost, and an understanding of the history of the field will fall, by default, to the province of the university professor and, in all likelihood, be viewed by many as "useless theory." This paper argues that social studies foundations CAN and DOES belong in a teacher training program, and can serve as an bridge from the college classroom to actual classroom teaching .

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[1] Walter Schultz, Foundations of Social Studies, Special Interest Group, Ed. James L. Barth. (NCSS, The Foundations of Social Studies, Special Interest Group, January, 1989), ii, iii. note: for the purposes of this paper, foundations of social studies is treated as the historical study of the field's origins.

[2] James Leming, "The Two Cultures of Social Studies," Social Education 53, 1989. 404-408.

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Is the term social studies singular or plural? Is it hypenated (social-studies)? Is it capitalized (Social Studies)? Is it a real discipline, as history is? Is it really social science? Perhaps it is only a certification area? What exactly is the definition of social studies? Why does social studies not appear in any of the recent national reforms efforts, instead the fields of history and geography are present? These questions, and many more, are but a small sampling of some of the challenges facing the field of social studies.

If the above questions are posed to a group of pre-service teachers in their initial social studies methods class, it is unlikely that any substantive answers would emerge. This paper argues that by exploring these questions, both contemporarily and historically, pre-service social studies professional would be well on their way to better understanding, and subsequently teaching, in the social studies field. Students studying to be social studies teachers have the dubious distinction of taking but a single class in an area entitled social studies, that being a social studies methods class. Whereas biology, math, and foreign language teachers, to name but a few, have all taken numerous classes in their content areas, social studies teachers select classes from a variety of courses from the humanities and social sciences. It is, therefore, not surprising that pre-service teachers have little or no conceptualization of their own certification area.

RENEWED INTEREST IN FOUNDATIONS

For the past 20 years there has been a marked increase in interest in the origins of the social studies. Certainly prior to that year other work had been done on this topic, however, in terms of sheer numbers of studies, this was a watershed year. On the heals of these works numerous other special editions of journals, dissertations, articles, papers and even a published book have emerged examining the history of social studies.

This relatively new interest in the history of social studies may be traced to a variety of factors. These factors include increased calls for abandonment of social studies; a recognition of the ahistorical nature of social studies practitioners; an untapped and unexplored area of

historical research (and while nature may abhore a vacuum, graduate students and professors find them rich areas of potential research); a recognition that the last of the "Masters" of social studies, such as Edgar Wesley and Paul Hanna, were dying off; the fact that 1991 was the 75th anniversary of the release of the seminal report Social Studies in Secondary Education; and finally, a core group of researchers with similar interests came together united in concern to explore and disseminate their historical studies.

This roots of social studies are rich and varied. Many of the seminal names in American education have had a significant role in early conceptualizations and development of social studies curricula. These names include John Dewey, James Harvey Robinson, Harold Rugg, George Counts, and Paul Hanna. Social studies has been throughout its existence, at best, an uneasy alliance among groups vying for control, or inclusion, in the curriculum. Over the past 75 years social studies has seved many masters, many at the same time. Social studies has, during its nearly 80 years of curricular evolution, been equated with citizenship education, social education, civic competence, history education, critical thinking, and even recently, the venue for AIDS education. Because social studies, and particularly, NCSS, have been open to input from many diverse groups throughout their respective existence, both the social studies curriculum and NCSS have been criticized for being unresponsive to the dogmatic demands of special interest groups.[3]

Social studies has been under attack since it emerged as a viable curriculum area in 1916. The fact that a renewed barrage of criticism has recently emerged calling for the abondonment of social studies is best understood within the context of the 75 year old debate between the value of a socia! studies curriculum versus a more discipline-based history one.[4] Recently issued documents such as The Bradley Commission on History in Schools, the book Historical Literacy, and Federal reform initiatives with '2000' in the title, each support a discipline-based history and geography curriculum. Either explicitly

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[3] this issue is discussed in many sources. For an often cited example, see, Hazel W. Hertzberg, Social Studies Reform, 1880-1980 (Boulder, CO: Social Science Education Consortium, 1981).

[4] for a discussion of the debate, see David W. Saxe, Social Studies in Schools (Albany: SUNY, 1991). and David Jenness, Making Sense of Social Studies (Macmillan: New York, 1990).

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describing social studies as "ill-defined (and) easily invaded by curricular fads," or implicitly ignoring its existence, these reports have collectively decided the field is not worthy of "saving," and is best discarded.[5]

If one does attempt to ascertain the field's beginnings, their exists a great deal of contradictory information, in both popular and professional literature. An article in Newsweek states "Social studies began in the 1930's as an effort to make the subject more 'relevant.' "[6] This article continues by stating that Paul Hanna was social studies "original champion."[7] However, the editior of a special edition of the Journal of Thought, wrote " With Earle Rugg serving as midwife, social studies was "born" in 1916.[8] Bryant Griffith, in 1991, writes regarding the issue of whether social studies continues to exist for any viable rationale, that "...the subject, started by John Dewey and others...has run its course" [9] For this paper's purposes, the issue in Griffith's article is his crediting primarily Dewey (and others-whoever they may be) with starting social studies. Other authors have identified educators ranging from Harold Rugg, Thomas Jesse Jones and Arthur William Dunn, as being the originator of social studies. As noted by Saxe, a persistent mythology exists regarding the origins of social studies.[10] As there is surely an ongoing debate about the contemporary state and direction of social studies, it is no surprise that the history of the field is also a contested matter.[11]

METHODS TEXTBOOKS AND FOUNDATIONS

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[5] Diane Ravitch, "The Plight of History in Schools," Chapter in Historical Literacy, PaulGagnon (ed), (Macmillan: New York, 1989), pg. 60.

[6] J. Alter and L. Denworth, "A (Vague) Sense of History," Newsweek [Special Issue] 1990 Fall/Winter, 31-33.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Virginia Atwood, "A Historical Perspective of Social Studies" Journal of Thought (17) 3,Fall 1982, 8.

[9] Bryant Griffith, "The Abandonment of Social Studies," Theory and Research in Social Education (Spring 1991) XIX, no. 2. p. 136.

[10] David W. Saxe, "Framing a Theory for Social Studies Foundations", Review of Educational Research (Fall 1992) 62, no. 3. p. 259.

[11] for an interesting account of the ongoing contest regarding interpretations of the history of social studies, see the exchange of letters in ""Reactions and Response,"Theory and Research in Social Education (Summer 1992) XX, no. 3. p. 313-350.

The social studies methods textbook is often the pre-service teachers' first professional exposure to the field. An examination of these textbooks is revealing relative to their mention of social studies foundations. There exists a notable shift in these methods textbooks relative to the space accorded foundations.

Social studies methods textbooks prior to the 1980's almost universally make no mention of foundations. In those textbooks that do include foundations, in every examined text a single paragraph (with one notable exception) was the extent of the discussion. For example, In Working With Children In Social Studies, published in 1961, no mention beyond a single paragraph in which the authors state "Even after a half-century of use, the term *social studies* needs continual clarification."[12] Teaching The New Social Studies, published in 1966 and intended primarily for secondary teachers, makes no mention of foundations. In Teaching Significant Social Studies in the Elementary School, published in 1977, there is not a single paragraph mention of social studies foundations.

A review of recently published social studies methods textbooks reveals almost all make some mention of the history of social studies. Whereas in the past the extent of the inclusion of foundations was most often a paragraph in the most generous instances, many recent books dedicate an entire chapter to origins.[13]

Although this constitutes but a brief review of selected social studies textbooks, what is gleaned from this cursory examination is signficant. Whereas a generation ago barely a mention of social studies foundations was to be found in textbooks, the 1990's find this inclusion to be a common occurence. Still, practioners in the field still do not find the study of the field's origins to be of either interest or value to their daily concerns.[14] This gulf of interest between field practioners and higher education personnel has been labeled the "Two Cultures" debate.

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[12]Edith Merritt, Working with Children in Social Studies (San Fransisco: Wadsworth, 1961), 8.

[13]See for example Murry Nelson, Children and Social Studies (Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt,1992) Chapter 1. and David Warren Saxe, Social Studies for the Elementary School (Boston:, Allyn and Bacon, 1994), Chapter 7. and Peter H. Martorella, Teaching Social Studies in Middle and Secondary Schools (New York: Macmillan, 1991), Chapter 1.

[14]This is determined primarily through anecdotal data. Membership in the NCSS "Foundations SIG" is mostly comprised of professors.

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THE TWO CULTURES

As first noted by James Leming in "The Two Cultures of Social Studies," their exists two distinct cultures within the field. One is the classroom social studies teacher, or the practitioner, the other is the college social studies professor, or the intelligentsia.

Leming writes that the concerns and interests of these two groups are very different, and that neither group seems interested in the activities of the other. Leming cites such items as citizenship, basic literacy, good work habits, self-discipline, and academic excellence, to list but a few, as areas in which the two cultures hold different opinions.

Leming holds that this gulf bodes poorly for social studies, both as a profession and as a field. He writes that "The head has lost touch with the body."[15] The two groups have little, if any, formal contact, even being represented within NCSS by two different professional journals. Theory and Research in Social Education for higher education, and Social Education, for the classroom teacher.

In fixing the origins of this rift of views and interest in social studies, Leming writes "This problem (meaning the Two Cultures) has

> been present since the beginning of the social studies in 1916. The gap between the two cultures of the social studies has grown wider over time until at present, it is so great as to imperil the very existence of anything that could be called the "social studies Profession." "[16]

Leming argues that "creative change in the social studies requires a common meeting ground where meaningful dialogue between the two cultures can take place..."[17] To address this difference, Leming places the responsibility to reconcile this gap with the intelligentsia.

RECONCILIATION

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[15] James Leming, The Two Cultures of Social Studies Education. Social Education (1989) 53, 406.

[16] Ibid., 404.

[17] Ibid., 408.

This paper presents the theory that a study of the foundations of social studies can serve as a bridge on which to forge an avenue of communication between the Two Cultures. Certainly a common interest in foundations is not going to address all the varied concerns of the two cultures; it is doubtful any ONE area could serve to unite these two cultures. But foundations offers an opportunity for these two groups to begin to communicate in areas which will serve both professional growth and address the increasingly hostile attacks to the profession.

The use of foundations in social studies teacher training programs is one area to begin to forge a line of communication between the two groups. As has already been documented, social studies methods textbooks have begun to dedicate increased space to foundations, it is now up to the methods professor to fully exploit the opportunities that affords.

Social studies has come under increasing bellicose attacks from its critics in the last decade. For example, the organization the National Council for History Education, Inc., which publishes the montly newsletter History Matters!, regularly urges interested school districts considering social studies curriculum revision, to contact them. More and better HISTORY education is the avowed goal of this organization. Likewise, as other supporters of a history dominated social studies curriculum infiltrated U. S. Department of Education ranks, social studies fell out of favor within federal curriculum reform efforts.[18] The incoming classroom teacher often find themselves teaching in an area with little apparent curricular cohesion. This lack of understanding about what social studies is, both on the part of classroom teachers and district curriculum specialists, has left the field vulnerable to current curricular fads.

It is in three distinct areas that a study of social studies foundations can both serve the interest of the two cultures, as well as the greater interest of the field of social studies. These are, 1) Curriculum development; 2) Professional development; 3) Classroom teaching methodologies. Each will be discussed below.

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[18] see for example, Nelson, Children and Social Studies, Chapter 16.

As school districts continue to decentralize decision-making functions, teachers are expected to assume greater control of the direction of the school curriulum.[19] With an understanding of the field's origins, teachers assuming the dual role of classroom leader and curriculum developer, will be better able to understand that social studies has always been a dynamic field, and has never had anything approaching an accepted canon of curriculum content.

As noted by Engle and Ochoa, there exists at least six distinct social studies curicular traditions.[20] Each of these areas has a past to it, and each is practiced by many school districts throughout the country.

As these traditions have emerged, a rich body of literature has been produced supporting and justifying their existence. For example, the New Social Studies movement of the 1960's and early 1970's was particularly prolific in its production of material.[21] This literature has served to support a particular conception of social studies, both philosophically and practically. In other words, as teachers begin the daunting task of curriculum revision, a knowledge of the field's origins can make the task easier. The body of literature these various traditions has produced can be reviewed for contemporary relevance, and the necessary ideas can be appropriated. The need to "reinvent the wheel" can be thwarted by a simple understanding that other have undertaken these attempts in the past, and perhaps they too have asked the same questions contmemporary reformers are posing.

In professional development teachers will be in a much better position to understand the very field in which they are teaching. Foundations can help these teachers to build a vocabulary with which to first understand, conceptualize, and then communicate, their own vision of social studies. Without the vocabulary of conceptualization, individual teachers struggle to make sense of a field that reeks of disorganization

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[19] see for example the NAASP BULLETIN (January 1994) 78, no. 558. The entire issue is devoted to the concept of a democratic school.

[20] Shirley H. Engle and Anna S. Ochoa, Education for Democratic Citizenship (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988) Chapter 7.

[21] see for example issues of Social Education and The Social Studies during this time period, or for a classic methods textbook of the era, Edwin Fenton, Teaching the New Social Studies (New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston, 1966).

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and fadism. However, as teachers are able to intellectualize the vocabulary of social studies, such as civic education, reflective decsion-making, and citizenship, teachers are in a better position to make up their own minds what this means for their classroom practice of social studies. They are then not subject to the whims of curriculum developers, and textbook manufacturers that tell them, in essence, "Yes, this is THE way social studies should be done." With an understanding of social studies foundations, teachers are better able to defend their field, choose for themselves what to teach and why it should be taught that way.

For example, a study of social studies foundations would show that there have always been challenges to the field, and that from its inception social studies has had an uneasy alliance with numerous other social science and humanities areas. The recent reform efforts advocating a history-based social studies curriulum is very similar to that mounted by Henry Johnson, a professor at Teachers College, in 1915.[22]

As noted by Aronowitz and Giroux, teachers are often viewed as being little more than technocrats, carrying out the directives of those higher in the educational pecking order. These authors call for teachers to be able to develop a vocabulary of possibility, that is one that allows teachers to conceive of their role within education in a new and different way. The goal of this intellectual transformation, the authors posit, is to make teachers intellectual and moral leaders, in both the school and the community.[23] As teachers come to understand that social studies has many rich traditions, the most recent call for change will be judged with a careful perspective, one that appreciates calls for reform, and places the individuals personal conception of the field on much firmer ground. Calls for change may then be viewed from a perspective of numerous reform efforts, not as yet another new direction to which one needs to react.

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[22] Henry Johnson, The Teaching of History in the Elementary and Secondary Schools (New York: Macmillan, 1915), and Henry Johnson, An Introdcution to the History of the Social Sciences (New York: Scribners, 1932).

[23] Stanley Aronowitz and Henry Giroux, Education Stil Under Seige (Westport, CT:Bergin and Garvey, 1993), Chapters 2 and 6.

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The challenges to the direction of social studies education, that is to what tradition should the NCSS direct itself, is also not a new phenomenon. The recent challenges to the report Charting A Course, issued by the National Commission on the Social Studies in 1989, is another example of an ongoing debate within the field. Social studies has always responded to the times, whether that be the war times of World War II, or the cold war of the 1950's and 1960's. Change is therefore a strength of social studies, and those in the field should embrace its dynamic nature as one of its attributes.

As in any methods class, most professors spend at least some time addressing the issue of teaching methodologies. In conversations with students this is in what they are primarily interested. Interestingly, professors do not place as high a priority on these methods as do students.[24] Foundations can allow for this gap to be bridged, while in turn maximizing the pre-service teachers conceptualization of their chosen field, by addressing the issue of classroom teaching methodologies.

The majority of certified social studies teachers will teach at least one history class. As has been noted by many, textbooks are notoriously deficient, if not downright dangerous, to historical understanding. This issue can be addressed by actually engaging pre-service teachers in an historical study of the origins of social studies within the methods clsssroom.

Social studies foundations has no shortage of engaging, well-writ en primary sources revealing the struggles, issues and past conceptualizations of the field. This paper calls not for the use of contemporary accounts of social studies foundations, for this would be the same type of passive historical study pre-service teachers are disposed to teaching their future students. Rather, primary source material examination and study puts the onus on the student, the student is responsible for drawing conclusions about past issues in social studies. Reagardless of which tradition of social studies in which the student is interested, an understanding of social studies foundations

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[24] see for example, Jere Brophy et al, "Social Education Professors and Elementary Teachers: Two Purviews on Elementary Social Studies," Theory and Research in Social Education (Spring 1991) XIX, no. 2. p. 173-188.

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can provide a more complete perpective with which to both view contemporary practice and prepare for inevitiable future change.

History teaching is often characterized as passive, textbook dependent, and lecture oriented. Certainly, social studies foundations could be taught in such a manner. However, if teachers are to learn to engage their own students, it seems logical that they should have the opportunity to practice this in the methods classroom. For example, the debate concerning what should social studies be centered upon, either history, reflective decision-making, or some other tradition, can be engaged by examining previous articles, books and reports. In 1939, James A. Michener (yes, that Michener) wrote The Future of Social Studies.[25] Certainly any document posing such a question on the cusp of the depression and World War II would bear review for those interested in understanding how similar contemporary questions were answered in the past. Also, formal reform efforts by prominent historians is nothing new to social studies. The final report issued by the Commission on Social Studies, published in 1934, provides interesting insight as to how historians reconciled their interests within the social studies curriculum of their day.

Perhaps the best piece written on the teaching of history is the 1942 dissertation by Alan F. Griffin, "A Philosophical Approach to the Subject-Matter Preparation of Teachers of History," which was reprinted by NCSS in 1992. [26] This dissertation, even though it is over 50 years old and written to satisfy the requirements for a doctorate, provides a wealth of potential teaching opportunites to a methods professor. For example, Griffin challenges the notion that students need to know history on face value. He labels this as democratic indoctrination, and any type of indoctrination, regardless of its noble intention, is anathema to a democratic society. Instead, Griffin calls for the purpose of history teaching to be to cultivate the students ability to think critically, and not

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[25] James A. Michener, The Future of the Social Studies (Cambridge, MA: NCSS, 1939), Curriculum Series NO. 1, as well as the recently published James A. Michener, James A. Michener on the Social Studies (Washington, D.C.: NCSS, 1991).

[26] Alan F. Griffin, A Philosophical Approach to the Subject-Matter Preparation of Teachers of History (Washington D.C.: NCSS, 1992). This reprinted version also contains two short introductory articles. The entire version is much more legible than the uncopywrited version of Griffin's disseration which has circulated for years from one copied version to the next.

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to accept some version of history based on the words that are printed in a textbook or delivered via a lecture.

Curriculum reform reports issued are also an untapped ara of potential study. The seminal 1916 Social Studies in Secondary Education, issued by the National Education Association's Committee on Social Studies, is rich in its potential implications for contemporary social studies practice.[27] This document was the initial national challenge to the predominantly history-oriented secondary curriculum.

Whether using any of the above example of primary sources, or choosing others, the theme is the same. Students are actually doing history, the teacher (or professor) is acting as a guide and helping students to decide which issue or topic is of interest to them, and students are becoming more familiar with their chosen field.

HISTORICAL LITERACY

A brief note on the issue of historical literacy within the field of social studies foundations seems to be neccesary. This effort to include the study of foundations of social studies within the preparation of pre-service teachers EXPLICITLY is not one calling for students to achieve an historical literacy, or a pre-determined knowledge of a body of historical information, of the field.

For pre-service teachers to become experts on the field's origins is problematic for may reasons. Among these are as these students will soon be teaching students, to model an expectation of complete understanding (whatever that may mean) is simply foolish, if it is even possible to achieve. Secondly, to expect pre-service teachers to achieve what it has taken senior scholars in the field years to learn is also misguided. To do this would mean that pre-service teachers would would be reading the historical interpretations written by these foundational scholars, and not themselves interpet and make sense of the history of the social studies. This passive history learning is the very thing being criticized in schools, and to expect it from teachers is equally foolish.

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[27] U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin no. 28, 1916. Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, Committee on Social Studies. The Social Studies in Secondary Education, Arthur W. Dunn, Compiler. (Washington, D.C.: G.P.O., 1916).

CONCLUSIONS

That two cultures exist in social studies is a reality. The closer these two are able to associate, the better that bodes for the future of the field, and more importantly, for the education of students. Social studies continues to be held accountable for a variety of educational ills, ranging from producing historically and culturally illiterate students, to being a curriculum area that has outlived it once obscure purpose. As a study of social studies foundations will reveal - to the above charges, and many more not mentioned- the field has to plead guilty. Social studies has always responded to the demands of society, and it seems likely it always will.

As this paper has argued, those interested in preserving social studies can turn to a study of the field's origins for some, but not all, of the answers with which to respond to contemporary critics. But if one thing is clear, it is that critics of social studies have always been with us, and always will. Therefore, foundations may provide some understanding of contemporary events, but it may also serve a greater purpose.

This greater purpose may be to unite the two cultures of social studies in a limited, but important manner. Teachers are being called upon and expected to assume increasingly greater control over educational affairs in schools. Teachers that have a more sophisiticated understanding of social studies as a field, as well as what specific type of social studies curriculum they would like to see implemented in their school, are in a much better position to direct effective and lasting reform. This understanding of foundations may help protect the teacher from the latest fads and whims of narrow-minded, special-interest groups hoping to forge the social studies in their image.

Social studies has always been an exciting field. Educators have been attracted to the dynamic nature if the field since its inception. Teachers who study the field's origins will better understand that both cultures have a necessary place in the survival of social studies.